

Description of the Designation/Classification Layer in Air Quality-GIS: State Standards

The Following is Applicable to All State Pollutants

COVERAGE NAMES:

- **STATE_CO** (State Carbon Monoxide)
- **STATE_LEAD** (State Lead)
- **STATE_NO2** (State Nitrogen Dioxide)
- **STATE_OZONE** (State Ozone)
- **STATE_PM10** (State Particulate Matter 10 microns)
- **STATE_SO2** (State Sulfur Dioxide)
- **STATE_SULFATE** (State Sulfate)
- **STATE_H2S** (State Hydrogen Sulfide)
- **STATE_VRP** (State Visibility Reducing Particles)

Concise Summary:

This layer is a statewide polygon coverage for California (State) Designations and Classifications, which together give an indication of the air quality status of areas in California with respect to the State ambient air quality standards for specific pollutants.

The State “**Designation**” of an area indicates whether the area is in compliance with the California State Ambient Air Quality Standard (State standard) for a specific pollutant. State Designations are made by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), annually based on air monitoring data for the previous three calendar years. The following State designation categories are used for all nine pollutants with a State Standard; however, the number of current designations varies by pollutant and by year:

- Attainment: The State standard(s) for the pollutant was/were not violated in the area during the previous three calendar years, based on data that meet the criteria for being complete and representative.
- Nonattainment: A State standard for the pollutant was violated at least once in the area during the previous three calendar years. Air quality data affected by “highly irregular or infrequent events” are excluded from determining nonattainment.
- Nonattainment-Transitional (a sub-category of Nonattainment): A State standard for the pollutant was violated during the previous three calendar years, but recent data indicate that the area’s air quality for that pollutant is improving and the area is expected to reach attainment within the next three years.
- Unclassified: Available data for the area are insufficient for determining attainment or nonattainment for the pollutant. Note: This term is intended to indicate that there is no “designation”, **not** that there is no “classification” (see below for definition) – it is a misnomer widely used in air quality.

The “**Classification**” is a subdivision within the Nonattainment designation, and is only assigned to nonattainment areas. Classifications indicate the degree of severity of the air quality problem in an area, the level of emission control requirements, and the time schedule allowed for attaining the standard. The State classification of an area is based not only on air quality data, but also on negotiations between the CARB and local agencies. State nonattainment areas are assigned one of the following State classifications (listed from worst to best air quality):

- Extreme;
- Severe;
- Serious;
- Moderate;
- Nonattainment-No Classification: Some nonattainment areas do not have classifications, and are indicated by the label “Nonattainment-No Classification.”
Note: These are *not* the same as Unclassified areas (see explanation above for “Unclassified”).)

On January 2004 Air Resources Board (ARB) approved changes but will NOT be reflected in these shapefiles because the Governor has ordered that no new regulations be implemented. State Air Quality designations are regulations covered by the executive order. ARB staff has advised that the 2002 designations are the official State designations at this time.